

Inspection of a good school: Bessemer Grange Primary School

Dylways, London SE5 8HP

Inspection dates:

22 and 23 May 2024

Outcome

Bessemer Grange Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils delight in coming to this school. They eagerly anticipate the learning experiences that each new day brings. Pupils said that the adults in school do lots to make them feel safe. They are confident that any of their concerns will be promptly addressed. The school has a culture of open communication and encourages pupils to speak up.

The school wants pupils to know and believe that they can 'achieve anything with focus, effort and support'. Pupils respond positively to this message. They achieve well across the curriculum.

'Being respectful' is one of the school's core values. This can be seen in how pupils treat each other, and adults, with kindness and respect. Pupils are confident and articulate, and they behave well. They attend school regularly. When absence becomes a concern, leaders do everything reasonably possible to support pupils in attending school regularly.

The school provides many opportunities for pupils to engage with their local community. For example, during the harvest festival, pupils collect donations for the local food bank. They frequently visit the local library, making full use of its resources. Additionally, pupils enjoy working with a nearby school on a range of initiatives. These have recently included an art project and a recycling task. The school's annual street carnival provides pupils with opportunities to share their artwork and sculptures with local residents.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The school has designed its curriculum with great care. Its learning aims are well thought out and carefully arranged. For example, curriculum content is structured in a way that ensures that pupils have the knowledge that they need to learn new concepts. In early years, for instance, children begin to learn about different places and what these are like. They have great fun using programmable floor robots to 'travel' from one country to

another on a giant world map. This prepares them for when they learn about the polar regions and the rainforest in the Year 1 geography curriculum.

Pupils receive strong support in learning the curriculum. Teaching uses effective models and images to help them to grasp new concepts. Typically, teaching approaches break down new ideas into manageable parts, aiding pupils' understanding and retention of what is being learned. Pupils also routinely learn and recall subject-specific vocabulary. In a few instances, pupils are given too much information at once. This can make it difficult for them to retain and apply what they have learned.

Staff use assessment information well. They are quick to spot pupils' misconceptions when they arise. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are identified at the earliest opportunity. Effective adaptations to teaching are made, enabling all pupils, including those with SEND, to learn the curriculum well.

The curriculum is complemented by a wide range of school trips, which pupils thoroughly enjoy. For example, trips out to the countryside are planned to support pupils' understanding of the geography subject content that they have been taught. Pupils' learning in other subjects is also enhanced from many visits to museums, galleries and other places of interests. Governors ensure that all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, are able to join in with these experiences.

Leaders prioritise the teaching of reading in this school. The school has designed an effective phonics curriculum to develop pupils' early reading skills. It is arranged so that pupils in the early stages of reading consistently build on previous learning. Staff receive effective training to deliver the phonics curriculum. Pupils are able to practise their phonics knowledge as they regularly read books that are matched to the sounds that they already know.

Staff use regular assessment throughout the year to identify pupils who are lagging behind in their phonics. These pupils receive prompt intervention, which helps them to catch up quickly. Pupils demonstrate a genuine love of reading, and of books. The school uses many strategies to promote reading. These include library trips, a celebration day, author visits and buddy reading. Pupils also hear adults read to them daily.

Pupils display a positive attitude to learning. They participate actively in lessons and follow adult instructions promptly. Disruptions to learning are rare.

Pupils are taught about how to maintain positive relationships, both online and offline. The curriculum covers other important themes in an age-appropriate context, for example recognising what are legal and illegal substances. Pupils learn about and recognise the many differences that exist within the school and celebrate them. Pupils explained that the school makes sure that everyone has equal opportunities to take part in learning activities and the wider curriculum offer. Learning that everyone is entitled to express their view is reinforced when pupils elect their school council representatives.

Staff are proud to be a part of this school. They appreciate that leaders are approachable and that they have an 'open-door' policy. Staff said that processes have been streamlined to make their workload more manageable.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few instances, teaching of curriculum content presents too much information at once. When this happens, there are times where pupils do not pick up and build knowledge as securely as they could. The school should ensure that teaching considers carefully how much information pupils can process and retain, enabling them to consistently learn new knowledge across the curriculum.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in March 2015.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [definition of children in need of help and protection](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	130918
Local authority	Southwark
Inspection number	10327656
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	558
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Mark Mitchell-Rose
Headteacher	Sarah Beard (Executive headteacher)
Website	www.thegemfederation.co.uk/bessemer-primary
Date of previous inspection	29 January 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school is federated with another school in the local authority.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.
- The inspector held discussions with the executive headteacher, the head of school and other members of the senior leadership team.
- The inspector also met with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, geography and mathematics. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers and pupils, and looked at samples of pupils' work. Other subjects were considered as part of this inspection.

- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspector also considered the views of parents through their responses to Ofsted's surveys.

Inspection team

Edison David, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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